

The Brass Plates Version of Genesis

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When Lehi and his followers left Jerusalem, they took with them an unnamed book of scripture (known simply by its description—"the plates of brass"), which provided their cultural and religious groundings over a thousand-year period. Many Book of Mormon references to this record indicate that it was most likely a Josephite version of the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Nephi 5:10-16). It contained the writings of Isaiah substantially as they have come down in our textual tradition, and it reports many experiences of Moses and Israel as we know them from the Bible. But several intriguing references indicate that it contained materials that are not familiar to students of the Bible: Joseph of Egypt is cited at some length, and on subjects not mentioned in Genesis; otherwise unknown prophets, such as Zenos and Zenock, are important to Lehi's descendants; and David seems to play little or no role in the Book of Mormon understanding of the covenant between Israel and God.¹ The question raised in this paper is whether there are indirect evidences of further distinctive contents of the plates of brass. Can we learn anything else about those plates and their contents through an examination of indirect textual evidence in the Book of Mormon?

The Logic of This Inquiry

This paper reports a simple exercise in which a number of key phrases and concepts occurring in Joseph Smith's book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price and in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible are checked against both the Book of Mormon and the King James Bible.² My original impression that a number of these which show up prominently in the Nephite record are absent from the Bible was dramatically vindicated. Whereas most previous comparisons of the Book of Mormon with the Old Testament have emphasized their similarities, I wish here to call attention to some instructive differences. My hypothesis is that the brass plates version of Genesis used by generations of Nephite prophets may have been much more like the version we have received from Joseph Smith as a result of his inspired revision of the Bible published as the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price than the Genesis version handed down in our traditional Bible.³ This in turn has other possible implications, some of which will be discussed. For reasons that will be spelled out below, it is not plausible to conclude that the Book of Mormon is the source for the book of Moses, or that Joseph Smith is the source of both, as some of his critics might want to believe.

It seemed most appropriate to compare the Book of Mormon text with the Old Testament since these two are roughly contemporary in their initial composition and because those who wrote the Book of Mormon saw themselves as belonging to that culture which we would identify with the Old Testament. The Hebrew scriptures available to the Nephites were all in existence by 600 B.C. All the examples presented below are correlations between Moses and Book of Mormon language that do *not* occur in the Old Testament. My approach is built on an initial list of terms, phrases, and concepts common to both the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses. This list was then checked against the Old Testament, and any elements clearly present in that text were eliminated. For a variety of reasons, other sets of parallel references were found unconvincing and were also dropped. The final list contained thirty-three key book of Moses references that show up notably in 145 Book of Mormon passages (see the table in the appendix).

The second stage of my study was to assess the evidence for and against the hypothesis that these texts are independent of one another. The seven criteria of dependence used are listed briefly below and in more detail (along with their assessments) in the appendix:

1. The greater the number of significant terms repeated in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent. (F)
2. The more precise the similarities between parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent. (G)
3. The more deliberately shaped the repetition in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent. (H)
4. The more similar the contexts in which parallel phrasings occur, the less likely they are to be independent. (I)
5. Author awareness of a brass plates source reduces the likelihood of independence. (J)
6. The more distinctive the terminology repeated in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent. (K)
7. Presence of weak or strong versions of the parallel terminology in the New Testament, and even more so, in the Old Testament, increases the possibility that the book of Moses and Book of Mormon passages are independent. Although clear Old Testament parallels do not prove independence, their existence was considered sufficient reason to drop the occurrence altogether as evidence of dependence. (L)

For each of these seven criteria, two or more levels of persuasiveness are suggested and linked to features of the particular occurrence (see the appendix for these explanations). In all cases, the issue is the likelihood that the particular textual parallel listed could occur independently of any connection between the two texts. The listing in the table of the appendix also includes a linearized calculation performed as a rough means of combining the relative values of the seven categories into a common score to indicate approximate importance for showing dependency between the two texts. The result indicates greater or lesser probability of dependence, but is not intended as a rigorous measure of distances between probabilities or of confidence levels.

By selecting the highest scores for dependence, I was able to identify a group of parallels between these two texts, each of which is highly persuasive on the basis of criteria ordinarily used by scholars evaluating possible sources of texts. Given the uniqueness of some of these individual parallels and the brevity of the source text, the hypothesis that the texts are independent should be rejected. This conclusion is further illuminated and substantiated by reference to a second and larger group of passages that also fit the pattern, but with less persuasiveness. Textual dependence between the two texts could logically run in either direction. Examination of this question reveals the implausibility of the view that the book of Moses could be derived from the Book of Mormon, even though the latter was published first by Joseph Smith.

Correlations of Words, Phrases, and Concepts

Newcomers to studies of textual sources are often surprised at the small amount of shared material that must generally be demonstrated before scholars will agree that there is some connection between two culturally associated texts. I will first discuss a group of twenty Book of Mormon passages (Group 1 in the table) that present strong parallels with book of Moses materials. This first group is distinguished from the second in that none of these parallels finds expression in the Bible (with the noted exception of Moses 6:52 being found in Acts 4:12).

Moses records “*by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death*” (Moses 6:59). This source cannot be missed in Jacob’s sermon which, emphasizing resurrection as the answer to death, explains: “*resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall; and the fall came by reason of transgression*” (2 Nephi 9:6). Here we have double intensification of an implicit reference to the source—first by substituting “resurrection” for “death,” and second by reversing the order of the four terms. This reversing is a technique of biblical writers noticed by M. Zeidel. It is referred to as Zeidel’s law or as “inverted quotation,” and is particularly characteristic of quotations.⁴ Jacob also emphasizes his own adaptation of the distinctive verbal construction “to come *by reason of*” by doubling it.

The book of Moses account of Adam’s baptism is followed by the bestowal of the *priesthood* on Adam with the following words: “And thou art *after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity*” (Moses 6:67). This phrasing is reproduced in whole by Alma in his discourse on the priesthood when he said, “This *high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity*” (Alma 13:7; cf. Alma 13:9). In slightly altered contexts, both Enoch and two additional Book of Mormon writers use the latter half of this expression to describe the Lord, saying of him that he “is *from all eternity to all eternity*.”⁵ Although a version of the first half of the larger formula appears in the New Testament (Hebrews 7:3), the second half, and therefore the combination, are both unique to book of Moses and Book of Mormon passages. John W. Welch has identified seven or eight other similarities between Alma 13 and JST Genesis 14, further indicating that Alma possessed an expanded text of the early history of the patriarchs similar to that now found in Joseph Smith’s works.⁶

Some of the best examples of connections between these two texts are more complex, involving teachings and ways of thinking about something without exact replication of words or phrases. The doctrine of divinely given free *agency* is implicit in all of scripture, but is only taught explicitly as a fundamental concept in the book of Moses and the Book of Mormon. In Moses we learn that “Satan . . . sought to destroy the agency of man” (Moses 4:3), that God “gave unto man his agency” (Moses 7:32; 4:3), and that men are therefore “agents unto themselves” (Moses 6:56). Lehi picks up these same themes in a major discourse on freedom of choice or agency and teaches that “God gave unto man that he should act for himself” (2 Nephi 2:16); that by the redemption “they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:26); and that men “are free to choose liberty and eternal life, . . . or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Moses points out to Satan that because the Lord’s “*spirit hath not altogether withdrawn*” from him he can distinguish between God and Satan (Moses 1:15). The Book of Mormon writers frequently used this same language when warning people not to sin lest the Lord’s Spirit be withdrawn from them, too. Alma specifically cites this explanation to show why the devil has successfully gained power over certain people (Alma 34:35). Mormon borrows Alma’s language several times to explain the weakness of the Nephites, saying that “the *Spirit of the Lord* did no more preserve them; yea, it *had withdrawn from them* because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples” (Helaman 5:24).⁷ Here we see a string of passages in which the Book of Mormon writers follow one another in a particular application of a phrase from Moses’ account, using it to explain a withdrawal of the Lord’s Spirit and a corresponding expansion of Satan’s power (which Moses had successfully resisted). There is some complexity introduced in this variation, but the concept remains the same and takes on an independent life in the tradition of the Nephites.

Centuries of Christian theology testify to the lack of direct biblical teaching on the salvation of little children. But the book of Moses states simply that because of the atonement, “*children . . . are whole from the foundation of the world*” (Moses 6:54). Two Book of Mormon prophets provide a clear and ringing statement of the doctrine that little children are saved by the atonement of Christ. King Benjamin stated this clearly in his famous discourse (cf. Mosiah 3:16, 21), and Mormon wrote a long epistle on the subject at the end of Nephite history. In particular, Mormon said that “*little children are whole,*” and that they are “*alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world*” (Moroni 8:8, 12). An additional persuasive link between these two texts is that both King Benjamin’s and Moses’ teachings are in the immediate context of a statement that beside the name of Christ there will be “no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come” (Mosiah 3:17).⁸

One sentence from Moses seems to have spawned a whole family of formulaic references in the Book of Mormon: “And he became Satan, yea, even the *devil, the father of all lies*, to *deceive* and to *blind* men, and to *lead them captive at his will*, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice” (Moses 4:4). This language is echoed precisely by both Lehi and Moroni, who, when mentioning the devil, add the stock qualification: “who is *the father of all lies*” (cf. 2 Nephi 2:18; Ether 8:25), while Jacob says the same thing in similar terms (2 Nephi 9:9). Incidentally, the descriptive term *devil*, which is used frequently to refer to Satan in both Moses and the Book of Mormon, does not occur at all in the Old Testament. New Testament occurrences do not reflect this context.

The Book of Mormon sometimes separates and sometimes combines the elements of this description of the devil from Moses and portrays Satan as one deliberately engaged in “*deceiving the hearts of the people*” and in “*blinding their eyes*” that he might “*lead them away*” (3 Nephi 2:2).⁹ Particularly striking is the repeated statement that the devil *will lead* those who do not hearken to the Lord’s voice “*captive at his will*” (Moses 4:4). In Alma we find that those who harden their hearts will receive “the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are *taken captive by the devil*, and *led by his will* down to destruction” (Alma 12:11). Much later, Alma invokes the same phrasing to warn his son Corianton of the plight of the wicked who, “because of their own iniquity,” are “*led captive by the will of the devil*” (Alma 40:13). In the passage discussed above, Lehi taught his son Jacob that men “are free to choose liberty and eternal life, . . . or to choose *captivity* and death, according to the *captivity and power of the devil*; for he seeketh that men might be miserable” (2 Nephi 2:27).

A remarkable passage in the first part of the Book of Mormon pulls all these book of Moses themes about Satan together—to describe someone else. The implication is unmistakable when Laman characterizes his brother Nephi as one who *lies* and who *deceives our eyes*, thinking to *lead us away* for the purpose of making himself “*a king and a ruler over us*, that he may do with us *according to his will and pleasure*” (1 Nephi 16:38). Laman insinuates that Nephi, who chastises his wayward brothers, is himself like the devil. And resistance against him is not only righteous, but required. This account has the added complexity that it is a speech of Laman, who is quoted here in a record written by the very brother he attacks. If we accept the possibility that this text is dependent on a passage in the ancient book of Moses, we then recognize a major new dimension of meaning, not only in Laman’s speech, but in Nephi’s decision to preserve the speech, thus showing his descendants, and any other readers familiar with the Moses text, the full nature of the confrontation between the brothers, as well as the injustice of the attacks he suffered. The full irony is revealed when we reflect on the facts reported in Nephi’s record and realize that Laman’s false accusation against Nephi is an accurate self-description.

Tracing the Direction of Dependence

The foregoing discussion of Book of Mormon parallels to a number of book of Moses passages constitutes substantial evidence that the two texts are in some way dependent on one another or some common source. The

question that follows next concerns the direction of influence. The first of the two major possibilities is that the book of Moses (received by Joseph Smith in June and December of 1830) was based on the Book of Mormon (translated mainly from April to June of 1829), which theory, of course, will be most attractive to those who believe Joseph Smith invented both. Several reasons showing why such a view does not explain the connections between these two texts are advanced below. This leaves only the other hypothesis as the leading explanation—namely, that the writers of the Book of Mormon had access to the book of Moses text.

The Book of Mormon authors explicitly identify their version of the Hebrew scriptures as a lineage history handed down through the descendants of Joseph (1 Nephi 5:10-16). The fact that there are some differences between the record on the brass plates and the Old Testament we have today is evident in the Book of Mormon text. The argument of this essay is that the brass plates account of the creation and the founding generations of the human race might include the material restored in Joseph Smith's book of Moses. This suggests the possibility that by checking the Book of Mormon text against other noncanonical manuscripts we might identify further texts that seem to have been available to the Nephite prophets through the brass plates. That such other manuscripts were once in existence seems clear from some of the New Testament parallels, and particularly the concentration of such usages in the writings of John and Paul.

The idea that the brass plates contained a different Moses account than now survives in Genesis or the Jewish tradition may be consistent with David Noel Freedman's theory that our present Genesis through Kings is a relatively recent edition or compilation designed to shift the emphasis from history to law.¹⁰ The Book of Mormon itself reports a prophecy to the effect that the Bible which would come down to us in the latter days would have had many "plain and precious truths" removed from the original texts (see 1 Nephi 13:26-29, 32, 34-40; 14:23). These observations jointly suggest that the brass plates could contain earlier versions of several books. We might also want to test the hypothesis that our Old Testament version was rewritten for political reasons, as Freedman suggests.¹¹ Does it justify one particular competing tradition of Jewish origins? If so, it might constitute an early example of the textual corruptions described in the Book of Mormon.

Some people may be tempted to use these findings to argue that Joseph Smith was the common author of Moses and the Book of Mormon. But carefully considered, the evidence runs the other way. First, there is the matter of chronology. We can historically document the fact that Joseph began the Moses translation after the Book of Mormon was published. But it is clearly Moses that provides the unity and coherence to a host of scattered Book of Mormon references. It is the story of creation and subsequent events that supplies meaning to Book of Mormon language connecting (1) the transgression, fall, and death; (2) explaining the origins of human agency; (3) describing the character and modus operandi of Satan; (4) explaining the origins and character of secret combinations and the works of darkness—to mention only a few of the most obvious examples. The Book of Mormon is the derivative document. It shows a number of different authors borrowing from a common source as suited their particular needs—Lehi, Nephi, Benjamin, and Alma all used it frequently, drawing on its context to give added meaning to their own writings.

Perhaps most significantly, we have at hand a control document against which to check this hypothesis. A few years after receiving Moses, Joseph Smith translated an Abrahamic text. In spite of the fact that this new document contained versions of some of the same chapters of Genesis that are paralleled in the book of Moses, and in spite of the fact that the Book of Mormon has a large number of direct references to the Abraham, the person, detailed textual comparison demonstrates that this second document does not feature any of the phrases and concepts that have been reported above linking Moses to the Book of Mormon textual tradition. Nor does the distinctive, non-Old Testament phraseology of the book of Abraham show up in the Book of Mormon. The logic

that would lead skeptics to conclude that these common concepts and expressions provide evidence that Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses runs aground on Abraham, as the skeptical hypothesis would seem to require a similar pattern there. But such a pattern is not even faintly detectable.

It is also impressive that most of the influence from the book of Moses in the Book of Mormon shows up early in the small plates and the writings of the first generation of Book of Mormon prophets—significantly, those who had custody and long-term, firsthand access to the brass plates. Many of the later passages that use book of Moses terminology and concepts tend to repeat earlier Nephite adaptations of the original materials.

When there is evidence of interdependence between two texts, and one of these contains passages which play on parallel passages in the other in ways that assume the reader's familiarity with the other, the first one can be considered to be dependent on the second. The parallel passages discussed above, and some that will be discussed below, contain several examples, in all of which the Book of Mormon writer appears to leave unarticulated much of the meaning he wants to convey, assuming the reader will make the connection with the book of Moses material in his own mind, make a comparison, and draw inferences from both the changes and the similarities that he finds. This is trivially true of inverted quotations (1 Nephi 19:12; 2 Nephi 9:6). But in this latter passage, Jacob substitutes a word to make a point about death and resurrection, depending on our knowledge of the original to help us see his point. Similarly, and perhaps most dramatically, Laman's speech discussed above is significantly more meaningful once we see how it draws on the book of Moses descriptions of the devil to identify Nephi implicitly with the devil. Seeing the dependence of Laman's speech on the book of Moses text transforms a rather routine complaint into the most aggressive indictment possible, and helps explain the life-and-death struggle that eventually grew out of it. However, I could not identify any passages in Moses which depended on the Book of Mormon's context for meaning. These are not the kinds of subtle dependence that could reasonably have been reconstructed by Joseph Smith in 1830 as he produced the book of Moses. There is no reason to believe they are the kinds of things he would ever have noticed himself under any circumstances. His interests, knowledge, and background did not extend to this kind of textual analysis.

Other Book of Mormon Parallels

The above two sections of this paper set out and support the hypothesis that the Book of Mormon writers had access in the brass plates to a document substantially the same as the book of Moses given to Joseph Smith by inspiration in 1830. That hypothesis in turn illuminates a large number of additional parallel passages, which in and of themselves may not constitute the strong kind of evidence given above for dependence of one text on the other. However, this second group of passages corroborates the hypothesis in a cumulative way. These additional passages are treated in groupings below. There are quite a number of less powerful correlations which in and of themselves would not compel us to accept a historical connection between the book of Moses and the Book of Mormon. Some of these may have occurred by chance, and others have recognizable New Testament parallels, but read in light of the much stronger examples listed above, they too seem to add some additional weight to my thesis.

Both the book of Moses and the Book of Mormon are remarkable for their claims to a full revelation of Christ to ancient prophets before New Testament times. While the presence of New Testament teachings and phraseology in these books might be made to fit the view that these books are Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century creations, that approach ignores a number of other significant factors, as indicated in the preceding section of this paper. For those who accept or are even willing to consider the ancient origins of the texts produced by Joseph Smith,

correlations between them that include New Testament terminology will be of interest, and will contribute additional evidence for the evaluation of the thesis of dependence between these texts.

The first example shows how a statement from the book of Moses account can permeate the Book of Mormon, providing the stock terminology that will be used at widely separated times to describe the same prophesied event. As reported in Joseph Smith's Moses, Enoch the prophet is shown in vision the future crucifixion of the Lord, at which point he reports that "the *earth groaned*; and the *rocks were rent*" (Moses 7:56). Nephi chose nearly the same language to report what he saw in his great vision of what occurred immediately after the crucifixion, for he heard "thunderings and earthquakes, and all manner of *tumultuous noises*," and he saw "the *earth* and the *rocks*, that they *rent*" (1 Nephi 12:4). This passage is recognizably derived from the Moses passage, especially given that it is used as a description of the same future event. But later, Nephi quotes Zenos's description of the same events, saying "the *rocks of the earth must rend*; and because of the *groanings* of the *earth*, many of the kings of the isles of the sea shall be wrought upon by the Spirit of God to exclaim: The God of nature suffers" (1 Nephi 19:12). Not only does this passage report the exact four terms of the Moses cluster and in the same context, but it nearly reverses them, again following Zeidel's law.

Here we have a complex but exact parallel in a context which indicates the author is consciously quoting, that he has reformulated the material to play on his readers' awareness of the original source, and a stated claim that the brass plates provide the source. We cannot tell whether it is Nephi who reverses the order of terms from the Zenos version (presumably quoted from Moses), or whether Nephi reports straight the reversal written by Zenos. Hundreds of years later the Nephite record described the actual events using the same language of the prophecy, again referring to Zenos: "The *earth* did cease to tremble, and the *rocks* did cease to *rend*, and the dreadful *groanings* did cease, and all the *tumultuous noises* did pass away" (3 Nephi 10:9; cf. also 3 Nephi 10:16; Helaman 14:21; 3 Nephi 8:18-19).

Although the Old Testament does not contain any version of these descriptions, the case for dependence is weakened by the occurrence of a relatively close parallel in one New Testament account of these events where it is reported that "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent" (Matthew 27:51).¹² Still, the character of the parallels outlined above would suggest direct Book of Mormon dependence on the book of Moses source, and a possible distant connection of Matthew with a similar text.

Several examples of idiosyncratic phrases from Moses which are simply repeated by Book of Mormon writers (but not by any biblical authors) seem to indicate a special relationship between these texts. The Moses account introduces a novel phrase to describe the redemptive mission of the Savior of mankind. According to Enoch, the Lord told Adam: "This is the *plan of salvation* unto all men" (Moses 6:62). In his brief writings, Jarom reminds his people of "the *plan of salvation*," which has been revealed (Jarom 1:2). Alma also speaks of angels making "the *plan of salvation*" known to men (Alma 24:14; cf. also Alma 42:5).¹³

One of these recurring phrases in Joseph Smith's Moses is "*eternal life*." In a sweeping verse, now familiar to all Latter-day Saints, the Lord explains to Moses that his work and glory is "to bring to pass the immortality and *eternal life* of man" (Moses 1:39). In other Moses passages the same concept is restated in the same terms (Moses 5:11; 6:59; 7:45). Although this language does not occur in Old Testament texts, the Book of Mormon, like the New Testament, is full of it from beginning to end. It begins in 2 Nephi 2, the chapter that reminds us most strongly of the Moses texts, and is echoed thirty times by Nephi and every major writer of the book.¹⁴ The companion concept of immortality or immortal glory shows up three times in Moses, twice in conjunction with "*eternal life*"

(Moses 1:39; 6:59, 61). It is not clearly present in the Old Testament, but occurs in similarly clear passages throughout the Book of Mormon.¹⁵

Enoch appealed to the language of Adam to show that “*no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence*” (Moses 6:57). Nephi made exactly the same point in urging people to repent because “*no unclean thing can dwell with God*” (1 Nephi 10:21; cf. also 1 Nephi 15:33; Alma 7:21; Mormon 9:4). This one also shows up in the New Testament (Ephesians 5:5), and even faintly in the Old Testament (cf. Leviticus 22:3; Psalm 140:13).

In this same vein, Enoch records that Adam and his sons, as preachers of righteousness, “*called upon all men, everywhere, to repent*” (Moses 6:23, 5:14, and 6:57 all use similar phrasing). This universal call to repentance is duplicated in key sermons of Lehi and Alma (2 Nephi 2:21; Alma 12:33; see also how the Savior used it at 3 Nephi 11:32). And the concept is used twice by Moroni (Moroni 7:31; 8:8) and occurs in the New Testament (Acts 17:30).

These same passages are sometimes characterized by the additional stipulation that unless men do repent, they “*can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God*” (Moses 6:57). According to Enoch, Adam was commanded to teach this to his children (Moses 6:58). The exact phrase is used in similar contexts in five Book of Mormon speeches (cf. Mosiah 27:26; Alma 5:51; 9:12; 39:9; 3 Nephi 11:38). There are a handful of similar statements in the New Testament, with Galatians 5:21 being the closest.

In the Enoch passages the Lord draws a distinction between “*things which are temporal and things which are spiritual*” (Moses 6:63). The Book of Mormon invokes the same distinction in precisely the same words on several occasions. In the small plates Nephi twice explicates visions or scriptures by saying that they refer to “*things both temporal and spiritual*” (1 Nephi 15:32; 22:3). King Benjamin reminded his people that those who keep the commandments “*are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual*” (Mosiah 2:41). Alma encouraged people to pray for whatsoever *things* they needed, “*both spiritual and temporal*” (Alma 7:23). And he also distinguished between the *spiritual* death and the *temporal* death (Alma 12:16), and between the *temporal and spiritual things* the Lord provides for our benefit (Alma 37:43).¹⁶ This concept of spiritual things shows up in the New Testament, but not paired with references to temporal things (1 Corinthians 2:10-14). Other New Testament passages vary even more as the equation of things temporal and eternal with things seen and not seen (2 Corinthians 4:18; cf. Romans 15:27; 1 Corinthians 9:11).

Speaking first of the city of Enoch, and later of the millennial period, the Moses text says that the Lord’s people will “*dwell in righteousness*” (Moses 7:16, 65). Nephi also used the phrase in the same context to describe what would happen in the Millennium. Nephi’s usage illuminates the meaning of the phrase even more by suggesting that it is because the people “*dwell in righteousness*” that Satan will be bound and have no power over their hearts during this period (1 Nephi 22:26). A somewhat similar phrase does occur in the New Testament where it also refers to the Millennium. Peter looked forward to “*a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*” (2 Peter 3:13).

The Moses account also differs sharply from the Old Testament versions in its clear references to the Savior. Moses reports that God instructed Adam to be baptized “*in the name of mine Only Begotten Son*” (Moses 6:52), and informed him that he would receive the Holy Ghost. Numerous other passages in Moses refer to “*mine only begotten*.”¹⁷ Whereas this phrase occurs six times in the New Testament (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Hebrews 11:17; 1 John 4:9), it occurs even more frequently in the teachings of the Book of Mormon prophets. Jacob explains the point in some detail (cf. Jacob 4:5, 11), and Alma raises it again in his preaching (Alma 12:33-34). This is all in addition to the multitude of direct references to Jesus Christ which distinguish both of these texts.

Describing the infernal conspiracies hatched by Cain and his associates, Enoch said that “their *works* were in the *dark*, and they knew every man his brother” (Moses 5:51). From that time, he observed that “the *works of darkness* began to prevail among all the sons of men” (Moses 5:55). Nephi spoke repeatedly of those whose works were “*works of darkness*,” using the precise phrasing of the Moses text.¹⁸ His younger brother Jacob and a later Nephi also complained of the “*secret works of darkness*” (2 Nephi 9:9; 10:15; Helaman 8:4; 10:3). Enoch also refers to these conspiracies as “*secret works*” (Moses 6:15). This phrase is also used repeatedly in the Book of Mormon to refer to the same kind of conspiracies¹⁹ and has New Testament parallels (Romans 13:12; Ephesians 5:11).

The other phrase used in Moses to refer to these conspiracies is “*secret combinations*,” for “from the days of Cain, there was a *secret combination*” (Moses 5:51). The phrase occurs throughout the Book of Mormon²⁰ in exactly the same contexts as “secret works” and always carries the much richer and fuller connotations of Enoch’s descriptions than do the Old Testament accounts of murderous conspiracies.

Enoch’s history twice indicates that the wickedness of men invariably produces “*wars and bloodshed*” (Moses 6:15; 7:16). This is the general term used throughout the Book of Mormon as well,²¹ with some occasional variations which reinforce the prominence of the stereotype. Mormon described the opposite condition as “*peace . . . [and] no bloodshed*” (Mormon 1:12).

Moses reports that for their sins Adam and Eve (and later Cain) were “*shut out from [the Lord’s] presence*” (Moses 5:4, 41). Enoch later reports that as men are tempted by Satan, they “become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are *shut out from the presence of God*” (Moses 6:49). In this same general context Jacob taught the early Nephites that without an atonement “our spirits must have become like unto [the devil], and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be *shut out from the presence of our God*” (2 Nephi 9:9).

Joseph Smith’s Moses reports the sins of Cain and his descendants in much greater detail than the biblical account. Of particular interest is the evil conspiracy hatched by Cain to murder for gain: “And Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may *murder and get gain*” (Moses 5:31). The Book of Mormon describes several similar conspiracies. Helaman reports the nefarious band led by Kishkumen and how “it was the object of all those who belonged to his band to *murder*, and to *rob*, and to *gain power*” (Helaman 2:8). From a much earlier period, Moroni reports a group that also administered secret oaths “to keep them in darkness, to help such as sought to *gain power*, and to *murder*, and to *plunder*, and to lie, and to commit all manner of wickedness and whoredoms” (Ether 8:16).

It is characteristic of the Book of Mormon account of evil conspiracies that they are “*seeking for power*.” When the lower judges became corrupted, and when the kingmen revolted, they were all “*seeking for power*” (Alma 46:4; 60:17). Alma reports an interesting variation where the wicked were “*seeking to put down all power and authority which cometh from God*” (Moroni 8:28). Enoch uses the same phrase in the Moses account to describe horrible conspiracies of earlier times in which men fought against their own brothers “*seeking for power*” (Moses 6:15).

Many commentators on the Book of Mormon have noted the unique phrase describing the condition of fallen men as “*carnal, sensual, and devilish*.” The phrase is not known in the Bible,²² but occurs twice in the Book of Mormon, both times in this precise formulaic way. Synonyms are never used, and the three words always occur in the same order (Mosiah 16:3; Alma 42:10; cf. Alma 41:13).

Such usage demands a source in a prominent text or ritual. The book of Moses provides both. For it is here in this key ritual text that we learn how Satan came among the children of Adam and Eve and commanded them not to believe the teachings of their parents. “And they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be *carnal, sensual, and devilish*” (Moses 5:13). The point is exactly restated later when it says “Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him; and men have become *carnal, sensual, and devilish*, and are shut out from the presence of God” (Moses 6:49).

One phrase that occurs only once in each text still seems quite distinctive. Speaking of an apostate group, the Moses text reports simply that “their *hearts have waxed hard*” (Moses 6:27). When Alma saw “that the *hearts* of the people began to *wax hard*, . . . his *heart* was exceedingly *sorrowful*” (Alma 35:15).²³ This text expands on the phrase by illustrating its opposite in Alma’s righteous response.

In a similar vein, the Moses account characterizes the wicked of Noah’s day, who defended their ways, as “*lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of [their] heart*” (Moses 8:22). This is invoked holistically as an implicit comparison when Alma reports the defensive speech of the apostate Nehor who was “*lifted up in the pride of his heart*” (Alma 1:6).²⁴ This is another case similar to 1 Nephi 16:38, where much of the meaning of the parallel is signalled more by the similarity of context than by the words that are repeated.

The Book of Mormon is notable for what would appear as a unique invention, the cursing of half of Lehi’s family and their descendants, and the marking of the cursed group with a dark skin that produced a social isolation between them and their relatives who did not have the curse. But in Moses we see the same thing happening to Cain and his descendants (Moses 5:25; 40-41; 7:22). These passages go far beyond the information available in Genesis, particularly concerning the effect of the skin color upon Cain’s descendants (Genesis 4:11, 15).

Describing his encounters with Deity and with the devil, Moses remarks that he was able to look upon Satan “*in the natural man*” (Moses 1:14). The Book of Mormon prophets picked up this same term to distinguish men who did and did not have the Spirit of God upon them. Benjamin explained that “*the natural man* is an enemy to God” and that men can become Saints only by “[putting] off *the natural man*” (Mosiah 3:19). Alma carries the theme forward by inquiring “what *natural man* is there that knoweth these things?” (Alma 26:21). A similar usage crops up in the New Testament once (1 Corinthians 2:14).²⁵

In addition to phrase correlations, we have one unique name correlation between Moses and the Book of Mormon. *Omner* was a name of one of the four sons of Mosiah.²⁶ But in Moses it is the name of a city, and in the Book of Mormon the name of a land (Moses 7:9; Alma 51:26). (The term *shum* also occurs uniquely in these two sources, though it is a name in Moses and a unit of measure for gold in the Book of Mormon.)²⁷

Finally, an important form of linguistic punctuation which is used by several Book of Mormon writers and which does not obviously appear in the Old Testament, is used in Moses in the same way. Moses ends an important segment of text with the statement: “And thus it is. Amen.”²⁸ It can be shown that Nephi used this same phrase to mark significant structural junctures in the text.²⁹ Allusions to final judgment and testimony of the gospel provide additional contextual parallels for some of these passages.

Conclusion

Some final caveats are in order. Any project like this is unavoidably handicapped by the fact that none of the texts being compared is available in the original languages. For those who do not believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet, this point alone would make this entire exercise quite uninteresting. But those of us who do recognize Joseph as an inspired restorer of ancient texts need not be precluded from thoughtful investigation of this matter. It should be sufficient for us to see that neither Joseph's language, nor the language of the Old Testament that was familiar to him, accounts for the correlations we have observed in the foregoing comparisons. New Testament influence is also largely excluded for the primary cases of the first group on which the conclusions of this study rest. Furthermore, there has been no effort made to identify appearances of the key phrases in this study in either the Doctrine and Covenants or Joseph Smith's own writings. Their presence or absence in those texts is equally compatible with the hypothesis developed in this paper. A casual survey suggests that some show up there, and others do not.

Reliance on computerized text comparisons has both advantages and dangers. Many phrases were included only because the computer picked up what was otherwise unnoticed. On the other hand, the computer cannot make judgments of relevance or significance. Computer analyses must always be supplemented by a careful reading and rereading of the text, as the machine cannot pick up more subtle parallels of meaning and context. And because the King James Version is the only biblical text used, there remains a significant likelihood that some of the parallels assembled in this study will eventually be found to have some kind of Old Testament counterparts, thus reducing their contribution to the conclusions drawn here. Unless, however, such future discoveries include most of what is identified here, the textual evidence will continue to favor the thesis that the brass plates version of Genesis had contents similar to the book of Moses and that phrases found in the book of Moses/brass plates would also appropriately be found in the Book of Mormon.

Appendix: Analytical Chart of Book of Moses References That Appear in the Book of Mormon

I am grateful to John W. Welch for giving me the extra encouragement I needed to undertake the following exercise. The point of the chart provided below is twofold. The first purpose is merely to list the passages included in the paper. The second is to attempt a crude computation of statistical probability of dependence between the texts. This is not the kind of thing that scholars have done much with. I offer this analysis only because I think it does produce some useful information, if not clear and precise measures of probability. A key to the chart precedes the specific data, and following the table is a discussion of the assumptions that underlie it.

Column	Description
A.	Cluster number (1-33)
B.	List of key terms in cluster in original order
C.	Book of Moses key reference (multiple references not listed)
D.	Book of Mormon reference

E.

Cluster type (a, b, c) a. single word b. phrase c. synonymous term or phrase

F.

Number of significant repeated terms

G.

Precision of reference (same terms, same order) 1. possible variant, recognizable similarities 2. variant, but recognizably the same 3. minor variation only 4. no variation

H.

Deliberate reshaping or manipulation of source 1. casual or even accidental reference 2. paraphrase or other loose reference 3. adaptation of source to context 4. exact repetition 5. play on original terms or word order such that present formulation requires knowledge of original to convey full meaning (including inverted quotations)

I.

Similarity of context 1. Weak similarity of context 2. Define similarity of context 3. Exact context evident or evoked by repetition of contextual language

J.

Author's awareness of a brass plates source 1. consciousness of source not implied or meaning not precisely the same and access to brass plates unclear 2. aware of either book of Moses or intermediary Book of Mormon

sources and meaning close to source 3. stated use or awareness of brass plates as source

K.

Distinctiveness of the concept or the terms (in American discourse) 1. English terminology common to nineteenth-century Americans 2. somewhat distinctive terminology 3. unique or distinctive terminology

L.

Other occurrences (clear Old Testament reference disqualify items from this study) 1. strong New Testament parallel and/or weak Old Testament parallel 2. weak New Testament parallel and no Old Testament 3. no biblical parallels found, strong or weak

M.

Score. This number is calculated in the following manner: The seven criteria (G through L) are weighted modestly to ensure that the more important ones have a larger effect. The values in columns G, H, I, and K are doubled, and the values in L are tripled. All seven values are then multiplied in a linearized calculation that combines them roughly into a common score designed to indicate relative degrees of dependence between the two texts. For convenience, the score is reduced by a factor of .001 and rounded to the nearest whole number to arrive at the score listed in column M.³⁰ The only object in presenting the results of these calculations is to emphasize differences and not to claim any numerical or quantifiable relationship or to ascribe any particular meaning to the distance between scores.

Table

Group 1

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	transgression-fall, fall-death	Moses 6:59	2 Nephi 9:6	b	4	4	5	3	3	2	3	207
2	order-days-years-eternity	Moses 6:67	Alma 13:7	b	6	3	3	3	3	3	2	140
3	Lord-from all eternity-to	Moses 7:29	Mosiah 3:5	b	3	4	4	2	2	3	3	83
3	Lord-from all eternity-to	Moses 7:29	Moroni 8:18	b	3	3	4	2	2	3	3	62
4	God-gave-man-agency	Moses 7:32	2 Nephi 2:16	d	4	3	5	3	3	3	3	233
5	Lord's Spirit-withdraws-from-man	Moses 1:15	Alma 34:35	b	3	4	3	2	2	3	3	62
5	Lord's Spirit-withdraws-from-man	Moses 1:15	Helaman 4:24	b	3	4	5	2	2	3	3	104
5	Lord's Spirit-withdraws-from-man	Moses 1:15	Helaman 6:35	b	3	3	5	2	2	3	3	78
5	Lord's Spirit-withdraws-from-man	Moses 1:15	Helaman 13:8	b	3	3	5	2	2	3	3	78
5	Lord's Spirit-withdraws-from-man	Moses 1:15	Mosiah 2:36	b	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	47
6	children-whole-from foundation	Moses 6:54	Moroni 8:8, 12	b	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	140
7	only name-given-salvation*	Moses 6:52	Mosiah 3:17	b	3	3	5	3	2	3	1	39
8	devil-father-of all lies	Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 2:18	b	3	3	5	3	3	3	3	175
8	devil-father-of all lies	Moses 4:4	Ether 8:25	b	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	93
8	devil-father-of all lies	Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 9:9	b	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	105
9	devil-lead-captive-his will	Moses 4:4	Alma 12:11	c	4	4	3	2	3	3	3	124
9	devil-lead-captive-his will	Moses 4:4	Alma 40:13	c	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	93
9	devil-lead-captive-his will	Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 2:27	c	4	2	3	3	3	3	3	93
10	devil-deceive-blind-lead	Moses 4:4	3 Nephi 2:2	c	4	4	3	2	2	3	3	83
11	lies-lead-well-deceive-eyes	Moses 4:4	1 Nephi 16:38	c	5	3	5	1	2	3	3	65

*This Group 2 item is listed here because it is linked to the preceding item in the text.

Group 2

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
12	earth-groans; rocks-rend	Moses 7:56	1 Nephi 12:4	b	4	3	3	3	2	3	1	31
12	earth-groans; rocks-rend	Moses 7:56	1 Nephi 19:12	b	4	4	4	3	3	3	1	83
12	earth-groans; rocks-rend	Moses 7:56	3 Nephi 10:9	b	4	3	3	3	3	3	1	47
13	plan of salvation	Moses 6:62	Jarom 1:2	b	2	4	4	1	2	3	3	28
13	plan of salvation	Moses 6:62	Alma 24:14	b	2	4	4	2	2	3	3	55
13	plan of salvation	Moses 6:62	Alma 42:5	b	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	124
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	2 Nephi 2:27	b	2	4	4	2	3	2	1	18
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	2 Nephi 2:28	b	2	4	4	2	3	2	1	18
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	2 Nephi 10:23	b	2	4	4	2	3	2	1	18
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	2 Nephi 31:18	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	2 Nephi 31:20	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Jacob 6:11	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Enos 1:3	b	2	4	4	2	1	2	1	6
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 5:15	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 15:23	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 15:24	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 15:25	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 18:9	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 18:13	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 26:20	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14	eternal life	Moses 1:39	Mosiah 28:7	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12

14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Alma 1:4	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Alma 5:28	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Alma 7:16	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Alma 11:40	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Alma 13:29	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Alma 22:15	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Helaman 5:8	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	3 Nephi 9:14	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	3 Nephi 15:9	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
14 eternal life	Moses 1:39	Moroni 9:25	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
15 unclean-dwell-presence-God	Moses 6:57	1 Nephi 10:21	b	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	28
15 unclean-dwell-presence-God	Moses 6:57	1 Nephi 15:34	b	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	41
15 unclean-dwell-presence-God	Moses 6:57	Alma 7:21	b	4	2	3	2	2	2	2	18
16 call on-all men-to repent	Moses 6:23	2 Nephi 2:21	b	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	12
16 call on-all men-to repent	Moses 6:23	Alma 12:33	b	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	12
16 call on-all men-to repent	Moses 6:23	3 Nephi 11:32	b	3	4	3	2	2	1	1	7
16 call on-all men-to repent	Moses 6:23	Moroni 7:31	b	3	3	3	1	2	1	1	3
17 nowise-inherit-kingdom of God	Moses 6:57	Mosiah 27:26	b	3	4	4	3	1	1	1	7
17 nowise-inherit-kingdom of God	Moses 6:57	Alma 5:51	b	3	4	4	2	2	1	1	9
17 nowise-inherit-kingdom of God	Moses 6:57	Alma 9:12	b	3	4	4	2	2	1	1	9
17 nowise-inherit-kingdom of God	Moses 6:57	Alma 39:9	b	3	4	4	2	2	1	1	9
17 nowise-inherit-kingdom of God	Moses 6:57	3 Nephi 11:38	b	3	4	4	2	1	1	1	5
18 things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	1 Nephi 15:32	b	3	4	3	2	2	2	3	41
18 things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	1 Nephi 22:3	b	3	4	3	1	2	2	2	14
18 things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	Mosiah 2:41	b	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	41
18 things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	Alma 7:23	b	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	28
18 things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	Alma 12:16	b	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	5
18 things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	Alma 37:43	b	3	4	3	1	2	2	2	14
18 things-temporal-spiritual	Moses 6:63	Helaman 14:16	b	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	41
19 people-dwell-in righteousness	Moses 7:16	1 Nephi 22:26	b	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	83
20 mine Only Begotten Son	Moses 6:52	Jacob 4:5	b	4	3	2	2	3	2	1	14
20 mine Only Begotten Son	Moses 6:52	Jacob 4:11	b	4	3	2	2	3	2	1	14
20 mine Only Begotten Son	Moses 6:52	Alma 12:33	b	4	3	4	3	3	2	1	41
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	2 Nephi 25:2	b	2	4	4	1	2	2	1	6
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	2 Nephi 26:10	b	2	4	4	1	2	2	1	6
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	2 Nephi 26:22	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	2 Nephi 9:9	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	2 Nephi 10:15	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Alma 37:21	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Alma 37:23	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Alma 45:12	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	1	12
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Helaman 6:28	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Helaman 6:30	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Helaman 8:4	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Helaman 10:3	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
21 works of darkness	Moses 5:55	Mormon 8:27	b	2	4	4	3	2	2	1	18
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	2 Nephi 26:22	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Alma 37:30	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Alma 37:31	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Helaman 2:8	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Helaman 3:23	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Helaman 6:38	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	3 Nephi 4:29	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	3 Nephi 5:6	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	3 Nephi 7:6	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	3 Nephi 7:9	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	3 Nephi 9:9	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	4 Nephi 1:42	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Mormon 8:27	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 8:18	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 8:19	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 8:22	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 8:24	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83

22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 8:27	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 9:1	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 11:15	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 13:18	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 14:8	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
22 secret combination(s)	Moses 5:51	Ether 14:10	b	2	4	4	3	2	3	3	83
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Jacob 7:24	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	3	37
23 war(s) and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Omni 1:3	b	2	4	3	1	1	2	3	7
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Omni 1:24	b	2	3	3	1	1	2	3	5
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Alma 35:15	b	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	21
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Alma 62:35	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	3	37
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Alma 62:39	b	2	4	4	2	2	2	3	37
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Mormon 1:12	b	2	2	5	1	2	2	3	12
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Mosiah 29:36	b	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	9
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Alma 45:11	b	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	9
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Alma 60:16	b	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	9
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Helaman 6:17	b	2	2	5	3	2	2	3	35
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Mormon 8:8	b	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	9
23 wars and bloodshed	Moses 6:15	Ether 14:21	b	2	2	5	3	2	2	3	35
24 shut out-from presence-God	Moses 6:49	2 Nephi 9:9	b	3	4	4	3	3	3	1	62
25 murder-get gain	Moses 5:31	Helaman 2:8	c	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	47
25 murder-get gain	Moses 5:31	Helaman 7:21	c	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	31
25 murder-get gain	Moses 5:31	Ether 8:16	c	2	2	3	3	2	3	3	31
26 seeking for power	Moses 6:15	Alma 46:4	b	2	4	4	2	2	1	3	18
26 seeking for power	Moses 6:15	Alma 60:17	b	2	4	4	2	2	1	3	18
26 seeking for power	Moses 6:15	Moroni 8:28	b	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	2
27 carnal, sensual, devilish	Moses 5:13	Alma 42:10	b	3	4	4	3	3	3	1	62
27 carnal, sensual, devilish	Moses 5:13	Mosiah 16:3	b	3	4	4	3	3	3	1	62
27 carnal, sensual, devilish	Moses 5:13	Alma 41:13	b	3	2	5	2	2	3	1	17
28 hearts-wax-hard	Moses 6:27	Alma 35:15	b	3	4	3	2	2	2	1	14
29 lifted up-imagination-his heart	Moses 8:22	Alma 1:6	c	3	3	3	3	2	3	1	23
30 natural man	Moses 1:14	Mosiah 3:19	b	2	4	4	1	1	2	3	9
30 natural man	Moses 1:14	Mosiah 3:19	b	2	4	4	1	1	2	3	9
30 natural man	Moses 1:14	Alma 26:21	b	2	4	4	2	1	2	3	18
31 Omner	Moses 7:9	Mosiah 27:34	a	1	4	4	2	2	3	3	28
32 shum	Moses 7:5	Alma 11:5	a	1	4	4	1	2	3	3	14
33 and thus-it was (is)-Amen	Moses 5:59	1 Nephi 9:6	b	4	4	5	1	2	2	3	46
33 and thus-it was (is)-Amen	Moses 5:59	1 Nephi 14:30	b	4	4	5	1	2	2	3	46
33 and thus-it was (is)-Amen	Moses 5:59	1 Nephi 22:31	b	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	138
33 and thus-it was (is)-Amen	Moses 5:59	Alma 13:9	b	4	4	5	3	2	2	3	138
33 and thus-it was (is)-Amen	Moses 5:59	Helaman 12:26	b	4	4	5	2	2	2	3	92

Assumptions of This Model

1. The model assumes a linear relationship between the seven items used in each score calculation. This assumes that each of the seven criteria adds plausibility independently of each of the others. This assumption would be compromised to the extent that any of the seven criteria were interdependent.

2. The model mainly attempts to give greater value to intuitively less likely features of references. A rough effort is made to weight actual differences used to calculate probabilities. Scores indicate greater or lesser probability but not magnitudes.

3. Probability assumptions for categories F through L:

F. *Number of Terms*. The greater the number of significant terms repeated in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent.

G. *Precision of reference*. The more precise the similarities between parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent.

H. *Deliberate reshaping or manipulation of source*. The more deliberately shaped the repetition in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent. Intentionality is inferred from contextual adaptation, exact repetition, or intentional manipulation (including inverted quotations) that creates additional meaning for those who recognize the intended reference to the source text. The latter category is deemed least likely to be independent because the intended meaning of the passage is only communicable to a reader who shares the author's awareness of the source. The author not only is influenced by the source, he uses it in new ways to communicate his intentions.

I. *Context*. The more similar the contexts in which parallel phrasings occur, the less likely they are to be independent. The evidence for dependence between two passages where the same concepts or terms occur is stronger when there are additional similarities in the two contexts. Context similarity can take different forms. For example, the two passages might refer to similar situations, feature the same accompanying statement, or be located in similar doctrinal discourses or historical explanations.

J. *Author's awareness of a brass plates source*. Author awareness of a brass plates source reduces the likelihood of independence. This awareness must be inferred contextually with explicit references to brass plates writings as the strongest evidence.

K. *Distinctiveness of the concept or the terms (in American discourse)*. The more distinctive the terminology repeated in parallel phrasings in two texts, the less likely they are to be independent.

L. *Other occurrences (biblical)*. Presence of weak or strong versions of the parallel terminology in the New Testament, and even more so, in the Old Testament, increases the possibility that the book of Moses and Book of Mormon passages are independent. But if these parallel expressions are not found in the Bible, this readily available text is removed as a possible source for Joseph Smith's translation language, thus increasing the probability that Book of Mormon writers are reflecting a source known to them from the brass plates. As already explained, clear Old Testament parallels were considered sufficient reason to drop the occurrence altogether as evidence of dependence.

Notes

1. See John L. Sorenson, "The 'Brass Plates' and Biblical Scholarship," *Dialogue* 10 (Autumn 1977): 35-36.

2. This study is limited to the translation in the King James Version. I assume that checking the following study against original texts may lead to some modification of my list of correlations.

3. Nephi explicitly records that he read to his brothers out of the brass plates, including the books of Moses and Isaiah (1 Nephi 19:21-23).

4. See P. C. Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations in the Bible," *Biblica* 63 (1982): 506-23.

5. Cf. Moses 7:29, 31, with Mosiah 3:5 and Moroni 8:18.

6. See John W. Welch, "The Melchizedek Material in Alma 13:13-19," in this volume.

7. Cf. also Helaman 6:35 and 13:8. King Benjamin gives the same phrase an interesting turn by accusing the wicked of *withdrawing themselves from the Spirit of the Lord* through disobedience (Mosiah 2:36).

8. Cf. Moses 6:52. Acts 4:12 contains nearly the same formula. Because of this New Testament parallel, this passage belongs in Group 2, but is listed in the appendix table in the order it appears in the text with the Group 1 statement to which it is linked contextually.

9. Compare Lehi's account of the devil's efforts to lead the children of men into captivity in 2 Nephi 2:17-29.

10. See David Noel Freedman, "The Formation of the Canon of the Old Testament: The Selection and Identification of the Torah as the Supreme Authority of the Post-Exilic Community," E. Firmage, B. Weiss, and J. Welch, eds., *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989), 315-32. Freedman, who is a prominent American biblical scholar, developed his thesis independently of any of the materials used in the present study.

11. Ibid.

12. Cf. also Romans 8:22: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Clearly Paul means something altogether different in this passage.

13. See also Jacob 6:8; Alma 12:25-26, 30, 32-33; 17:16; 18:39; 22:13; 29:2; 34:16, 31; 39:18; 42:11, 13, which refer to "the plan of redemption," an idiosyncratic Book of Mormon variant on "plan of salvation."

14. See 2 Nephi 2:27-28; 10:23; 31:18, 20; Jacob 6:11; Enos 1:3; Mosiah 5:15; 15:23-25; 18:9, 13; 26:20; 28:7; Alma 1:4; 5:28; 7:16; 11:40; 13:29; 22:15; Helaman 5:8; 3 Nephi 9:14; 15:9; Moroni 9:25. For sample New Testament parallels see John 6:54; 6:68.

15. The terms "immortal" or "immortality" occur in the following passages: 2 Nephi 9:13, 15; Enos 1:27; Mosiah 2:28, 38; 16:10; Alma 5:15; 11:45; 12:12, 20; 40:2; 41:4; Helaman 3:30; 3 Nephi 28:8, 15, 17, 36; Mormon 6:21.

16. Samuel the Lamanite was able to combine all of these uses of the distinction in one statement. See Helaman 14:16.

17. Cf. Moses 1:6, 16-17, 32-33; 2:1, 26-27; 3:18; 4:1, 3, 28; 6:52, 59, 62; 7:62. Cf. further Moses 7:50, 59.

18. 2 Nephi 25:2; 26:10, 22. See also Alma 37:21, 23; Helaman 6:30; Mormon 8:27.

19. See 2 Nephi 9:9; 10:15; Alma 37:21, 23, 25; Helaman 8:4; 10:3; 3 Nephi 3:7.

20. 2 Nephi 9:9; 26:22; Alma 37:30-31; Helaman 2:8; 3:23; 6:38; 3 Nephi 4:29; 5:6; 7:6, 9; 9:9; 4 Nephi 1:42; Mormon 8:27; Ether 8:18-19, 22, 24; 9:1; 11:15; 13:18; 14:8, 10. Cf. Helaman 6:30; 11:10, 26; Ether 8:9; 9:26; 13:15.

21. Jacob 7:24; Omni 1:3, 24; Alma 35:15; 62:35, 39. Cf. also Mosiah 29:36; Alma 45:11; 60:16; Helaman 6:17; Mormon 8:8; Ether 14:21.

22. See James 3:15, where a similar phrase occurs: "This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."

23. Cf. Matthew 13:15; Acts 28:27; Jacob 1:15; Alma 21:3.

24. Cf. Daniel 5:20; 1 Timothy 3:6; Jacob 2:13; Mosiah 11:5, 19; Alma 6:3; 7:6; 31:25; 45:24; 3 Nephi 16:10; Mormon 8:28, 36.

25. Cf. Mosiah 16:5; Alma 41:11-12; 42:10.

26. Cf. Mosiah 27:34 and numerous other references to this great missionary.

27. Enoch refers once to the valley of Shum (Moses 7:5) and twice to the people of Shum (Moses 7:5, 7). Alma mentions a “shum of gold” twice (Alma 11:5, 9).

28. Cf. Moses 5:59 with 1 Nephi 9:6; 14:30; 22:31; Alma 13:9; Helaman 12:26. Cf. also 1 Nephi 15:36; 2 Nephi 33:15; Mosiah 3:27; Alma 6:8; 7:27; Moses 6:68.

29. See Noel B. Reynolds, “Nephi’s Outline,” *BYU Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 134; reprinted in Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982), 58.

30. I am grateful to John L. Hilton for reviewing and contributing to the statistical reasoning presented here.